

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

TRANSMITTING,

In response to Senate resolution of December 8, 1885, statement of Chief of Engineers as to the improvement of Broad Creek, Delaware.

DECEMBER 15, 1885.—Referred to the Committee on Commerce and ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT,

Washington City, December 14, 1885.

In response to a resolution of the United States Senate, dated the 8th instant, the Secretary of War has the honor to transmit herewith a letter dated the 12th instant, from the Chief of Engineers, containing a statement of the work done by the United States in 1881 and 1882 for the improvement of the navigation of Broad Creek, in Delaware, and information as to what is necessary to complete said work, and the amount of money required therefor.

WM. C. ENDICOTT,

Secretary of War.

The PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS,

UNITED STATES ARMY,

Washington, D. C., December 12, 1885.

SIR: In reply to the reference to this office of a resolution of the Senate, of December 8, 1885, calling for information as to the state of the work done by the United States Government in 1881 and 1882, for the improvement of the navigation of Broad Creek, Delaware, and what is necessary to complete said work, and the amount of money required therefor, I have the honor to state that the river and harbor act of March 3, 1879, having made provision for a survey of Broad Creek from its mouth to Laurel, Del., with the view to its improvement, a report of the results of the survey was transmitted to Congress and printed in Senate Ex. Doc. No. 90, Forty-sixth Congress, second session.

The estimate submitted with this report was \$46,500 for dredging, to make a channel of 7 feet, at mean low water, 60 feet wide, to be increased to \$60,000 if the contraction of the water-way by wing-dams and training-walls should be found to be required to give permanence to the work.

The river and harbor act of June 14, 1880, appropriated \$5,000 for the work. As with this sum little could be done towards the improvement projected, it was a matter of difficulty to determine how to expend it to the best advantage. It was decided to excavate a channel 20 feet wide and 4 feet deep at mean low water, extending from the railroad bridge at Laurel to a point below Big Mills, a distance of 5,373 feet, following the south side of the proposed deeper channel. The work was advertised, but the bids received were too high, and were rejected. It was again advertised with the same result.

A new appropriation of \$10,000 having been granted in the river and harbor act of March, 3, 1881, and more money being thus available, it was decided to attempt to excavate a channel 32 feet wide and 6 feet deep at mean low water, following the south side of the proposed deeper channel for 6,500 feet. This work having been placed under contract was commenced in October, 1881.

The river and harbor act of August 2, 1882, made a further appropriation of \$5,000, with which and the balance of former appropriations work was continued until brought to a close in February, 1883, for want of funds, after having extended the dredging from the railroad bridge for about 6,500 feet, with some straightening and widening for about 4,300 feet further down.

From a resurvey made in March, 1883, it was found that considerable filling had taken place in the channel, showing, as indicated in the original report and estimate, the necessity of building regulating works, and money enough to build them not having been provided, it was not deemed expedient to dredge more in the stream unless such dikes be built.

In his annual report of 1882 the Chief of Engineers recommended an appropriation of \$20,000 for continuing the work, placing the cost at that time or final completion of the adopted project at \$32,625, or \$12,625 additional. The same recommendation was made in the annual report of 1883, but the river and harbor act of June 4, 1884, having failed to make further appropriation, no estimates for the work have been since submitted.

The sum of \$20,000 could be profitably expended during the fiscal year ending June 30, 1887, but the cost of completion of the work as originally projected may perhaps prove to be in excess of \$12,625 additional, as above stated, owing to the probable filling of the channel already dredged for want of the necessary regulating dikes.

The resolution of the Senate of December 8, 1885, is herewith returned.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN NEWTON,

Chief of Engineers,

Brig. and Bvt. Maj. Gen.

Hon. W. C. ENDICOTT,

Secretary of War.